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## RECENT VIEWS OF THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF ISOCRATES<sup>1</sup>

BY CHARLES D. ADAMS

The extent and importance of the change that is taking place in the estimate of the value of Isocrates' work as a political writer must impress the reader of Emminger's review of the literature on Isocrates for the years 1886-1909 (Bursian's *Jahresbericht*, 1911, pp. 76 ff.), or of the introduction to Kessler's little book. We had been taught for the most part to consider Isocrates as an unpractical dreamer, the "king of rhetoricians" indeed, and a man of pure Hellenic patriotism, but a man lacking in political understanding, blind to the demands of practical statesmanship. This view is expressed in extreme form in Ivo Bruns's remark in connection with the *Panathenaicus*:

Er hatte in besseren Tagen damit Erfolge erzielt, dass er scheinbar politische Ideen, die in Wirklichkeit völlig unpraktische Phantasien waren, zu sprachlichen Schaustücken verarbeitet. So hatte einst die Imitation des gorgianischen *Olympikos*, sein *Panegyrikos*, welcher—im Jahre 380!—zum Perserkrieg unter Athens Hegemonie aufforderte, trotz der Nichtigkeit des Inhalts durch die patriotische Phrase und den Glanz der Diktion Eindruck gemacht. [*Literarisches Porträt*, p. 525.]

The least radical change in this estimate of Isocrates we find in the view expressed by Wilamowitz in his chapter on the *Panegyricus* in the second volume of his *Aristoteles und Athen*, and in a more summary form in his chapter on Attic prose in *Die Kultur der Gegenwart* (pp. 66 ff.), where he says:

Mehr als einmal hat der Journalist höchst geschickt die Unterströmung der momentanen Politik so vor das Publicum gebracht, dass er es fortriss.

<sup>1</sup> Eduard Meyer, *Isokrates' zweiter Brief an Philipp und Demosthenes' zweite Philippika*. (Sitzungsberichte der königlich-preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Sitzung der philosophisch-historischen Klasse vom 17. Juni, 1909.) P. Wendland, *König Philippos und Isokrates; Isokrates und Demosthenes*. Beiträge zu athenischer Politik und Publicistik des vierten Jahrhunderts. (Nachrichten von der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse. 1910.) Dr. Josef Kessler, *Isokrates und die panhellenische Idee*. Paderborn, 1911. (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums, Vierter Band, 3. Heft.)

Den Ruhm, dem zweiten Seebund Athens und der unitarischen Politik König Philipps den Weg bereitet zu haben, kann dem Isokrates niemand nehmen. . . . Aber Isokrates hat keinen Gedanken ausgesprochen (es sei denn über seine Kunst), der ihm eigen gewesen wäre, und am glücklichsten ist er, wenn er Gemeinplätze behandelt.

Eduard Meyer fully accepts the view of Wilamowitz as to the relation of the *Panegyricus* to the second Athenian naval confederacy; he says (*Griech. Gesch.* V 371); "Die Schrift hat eine gewaltige Wirkung ausgeübt; sie erhob Isokrates mit einem Schlage zu dem ersten der lebenden Publicisten. . . . Sie enthält die Ankündigung, dass Athen, durch die Friedensjahre gestärkt, die erste Gelegenheit zu dem Versuch der Wiederaufrichtung seiner Seeherrschaft benutzen werde." In his estimate of Isocrates' political influence Meyer goes beyond Wilamowitz; he says (p. 337):

Indem er unternahm, die grossen politischen Fragen, welche die Nation bewegten, in formvollendeten Essays zu behandeln und ihr die idealen Aufgaben vorzuhalten, welche in dem Hader des Tagestreibens dem Bewusstsein völlig entschwunden waren, hat er in der That eine historische Wirksamkeit gewonnen, welche alles überragte, was die Politiker gewöhnlichen Schlasses zu leisten vermochten. Durch diese Thätigkeit ist er ständig gewachsen weit über das hinaus was seine Anlagen erwarten liessen, vom Rhetor zwar nicht zum Staatsmann, wohl aber zum politischen Wortführer der Nation: ihm ist es zu verdanken, dass neben und in der Stimme Athens auch die Stimme der Nation zu Worte gekommen ist.

With these views Beloch is in entire accord. He remarks that Isocrates' pamphlets were read from one end of the Hellenic world to the other, and that to their effect was added the personal influence of Isocrates on many of the ablest young men, who later became intellectual leaders of the nation. He holds that in great measure it was Isocrates who prepared the way for Philip's uniting of Hellas, and Alexander's opening of Asia to Greek enterprise and culture. Indeed in Isocrates' picture in the *Philippus* (§§ 120 ff.) of what the conquest of even Asia Minor would mean to Hellas Beloch sees almost prophetic inspiration. (Beloch *Gr. Gesch.* II 531.)

It is under the full influence of this newer estimate of Isocrates' political activity that the pamphlets under review have been written. The immediate occasion of Meyer's brief study, *Isokrates' zweiter Brief an Philipp und Demosthenes' zweite Philippika*, is the possi-

bility that we now have of fixing the date of the letter, through its reference to a severe wounding of Philip, which can now be dated, thanks to Didymus' commentary (see von Hagen *Philologus* LXVII, 1908, pp. 121 ff.). The letter falls in the late summer of 344, and, therefore shortly precedes the Second Philippic of Demosthenes, which belongs in the autumn or winter of the same year.

Meyer sees in the letter an earnest attempt of Isocrates to counteract the effect on the mind of Philip which must have been made by the unprovoked and slanderous agitation which Demosthenes and his followers were carrying on both in Athens and in the Peloponnesus. Meyer declares that Philip had most scrupulously observed every provision of the Peace of Philocrates; that so far from Philip's being responsible for the sufferings of the Phocians, it was his voice that had saved them from the utter destruction that some of their neighbors had demanded as the penalty for their sacrilege. Isocrates, fearful that Philip will at last lose all patience with the Athenians for tolerating the misrepresentation that he is suffering from Demosthenes and the other agitators, writes the letter to show Philip that these slanders come from a faction, and that with patience he can win the great body of the Athenians to permanent friendship. Meyer believes that the letter had no small influence on Philip, for in the next spring we find him sending an embassy led by his secretary Python of Byzantium, through whom Philip reiterates his friendship for Athens and offers to revise the terms of the peace if there is anything in it that is unjust (*εἴ τι μὴ καλῶς γέγραπται ἐν τῇ εἰρήνῃ*, *Halon.* 22.). Meyer sketches Philip's further efforts to preserve peace and interprets them as indicating that Philip's designs had never been against Athens, save so far as she came into conflict with his ambitions in the north. According to Meyer (and this is one of the most important statements of a paper every page of which is significant) the one steady object of Philip's ambition was not the conquest of Hellas, still less was it war against Persia, but from first to last simply the consolidation and expansion of the Macedonian kingdom by uniting under its control Thrace, Illyria, Epirus, and Thessaly. His aims were purely Macedonian; it was only when the policy of Demosthenes had forced him to bring all Hellas under his control that he turned to the idea of the

invasion of Persia; had he lived to undertake this, it is not likely, Meyer believes, that he would have prosecuted the war with vigor, or carried the conquest beyond the Taurus and the Euphrates. "The whole course of world history was changed by his murder."

Meyer considers the Second Philippic of Demosthenes not as an address delivered before the ecclesia—at least in this form—but, like the other published political "speeches" of Demosthenes, as a pamphlet. As a consequence of Demosthenes' misrepresentations of Philip in a recent mission to the Peloponnesus, ambassadors had come from Philip and from the Peloponnesus as well, protesting against such slanders and agitation. Demosthenes found himself put upon the defensive, and his resort had to be to reiterate his charges, not with any intention of precipitating an immediate war, but to turn the tide of feeling at Athens that was setting against himself and against the whole anti-Macedonian agitation. This brief statement is enough to show that Meyer's view of Demosthenes differs from traditional opinions even more radically than does his view of Isocrates.

Wendland, concurring fully with the views of Wilamowitz as to the *Panegyricus*, and with those of Meyer as to the *Second Letter*, gives in his paper, *König Philippos und Isokrates*, a detailed analysis of the *Philippus*, the *Panathenaicus*, and the *Third Letter*, with a view to determining the attitude of Isocrates toward the political situation at the time of the writing of each. He shows how, at the time of the writing of the *Philippus*, in the summer of 346, between the conclusion of the Peace of Philocrates and the destruction of the Phocian towns, Isocrates had abandoned his earlier hope that union of Hellas could be effected along the lines proposed in the *Panegyricus*. The failure of the second naval confederacy had convinced him that union could now be brought about only by an outside power; this power he saw and welcomed in Philip. Up to this point no one will question Wendland's statement. But when (p. 134) he interprets Isocrates' proposition in the *Philippus*, §§ 68–71, as equivalent to that of the formation of a "confederated state with Philip at the head," he goes beyond a reasonable interpretation of the text. In the text there is no hint of an organized, representative government of Hellas; the *Philippus* looks forward to a

position of Philip differing in no essential from that which is portrayed as already beginning at the time of the embassies described in the speeches of Aeschines and Demosthenes. The *Philippus* pictures Philip's court as about to be the gathering-place of "ambassadors" who shall come to consult with him for the common safety; all Hellas will await his proposals, accept his arbitrament, and pray for his safety (§§ 69 f.). This is precisely the situation that was already rapidly developing at the time of the negotiations for the Peace of Philocrates; there is in these words no suggestion of an organized confederacy of Greek states under Philip's lead; it is *πρέσβεις* who are to come to Philip's court, not the members of a confederate synod. Kaerst is justified in protesting against a tendency to see in these words of the *Philippus* the program of a Hellenic league (*Gesch. des hellen. Zeitalters*, I. 92).

Of especial value is Wendland's remark that in the *Philippus* Isocrates does not, or will not, see the inevitableness of collision between Athenian and Macedonian interests in Chalcidice and the Chersonese.

Incidentally it should be noted that Wendland misinterprets the text of the *Philippus* at one point. He speaks (p. 152) of the "brutally egoistic motive" of Thebes in the Phocian war as being the wish "selbst Herr der Tempelschätze zu werden." This is based on the words, *πρὸς Φωκέας πόλεμον ἐξήνεγκαν ὥς . . . τῶν τε χρημάτων τῶν ἐν Δελφοῖς περιγενησόμενοι ταῖς ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων δαπάναις* (*Philippus*, § 54). But *περιγίγνεσθαι* is to be taken here in its regular sense, *to prevail over, get the better of, not to get control of*; the meaning is that the Thebans vainly expected to be able, supported only by their own limited financial resources, to conquer the Phocians, supported as they were by the temple treasures.

Turning to the *Panathenaicus*, a work which Blass had characterized as "ein wüster Haufe Spreu, in dem die Körner recht selten sind," Wendland attempts to show that this product of Isocrates' extreme old age is not the senile encomium on Athens and disparagement of Sparta that it has been supposed to be, but that it is a shrewdly composed political pamphlet, designed for immediate effect on the treatment of two questions of the hour: the position of Philip and his future, and the need of a reform of the debased

Athenian democracy. Wendland believes that with the anti-Macedonian feeling rapidly reaching its height, as it was in the years 342-339, Isocrates found himself no longer able to write openly as a pro-Macedonian, or to address Philip openly as the coming restorer of Hellenic unity, and the leader of Greece against the national enemy. The *Panathenaicus* is therefore a pamphlet that must be interpreted by looking beneath the surface, according to hints that only the initiated will understand. Wendland's thesis is that in this pamphlet the long encomium on Athens is in reality an allegorical setting-forth of the liberal and just policy that Isocrates would have Philip adopt in his administration of Hellenic affairs; the censure of Sparta's selfish treatment of the states in the days of her power is intended as a warning to Philip. The Agamemnon episode paints a picture of the Philip of Isocrates' dream, the conqueror of Asia (an interpretation that Schaefer had suggested and Blass had fully accepted). In the last part of the *Panathenaicus* Wendland finds an appeal for a return from the degenerate democracy to the wisely balanced democratic-aristocratic government of the earlier days.

Granting that Wendland is right in his interpretation of the Agamemnon episode, it must be said that the treatment of the remainder of the *Panathenaicus* is altogether fanciful. An interpretation that demands so much acuteness on the part of the reader, so much finding of subtle, hidden meanings concealed under plain statements, defeats its own purpose. A treatise so written could have had no influence beyond the small circle of the initiate; it would appeal only to the few who had no need of the appeal. Where Wendland restores unity to the first part of the pamphlet, Isocrates himself apologizes for its lack of unity (§ 86). Of the part dealing with Sparta, Isocrates himself gives a full and consistent explanation through the words of his pro-Spartan friend.

In his second paper, *Isokrates und Demosthenes*, Wendland traces in the works of each man those expressions that may, with more or less of probability, be regarded as referring to words or acts of the other. He admits that positive proof of connection in such cases is seldom possible, for apparent personal references may after all be called out by the existing situation in general. Taken in this

way Wendland's paper gives an acute and sound account of the development of Demosthenes' political views, and of the fundamental antagonism between the positions and ideals of Demosthenes and those of Isocrates. The only serious criticism to which the paper is open is that in the earlier part there is an overemphasis on the points of similarity between the position of Demosthenes and that of Isocrates with respect to a pan-Hellenic invasion of Persia. Demosthenes does, it is true, in the speech on the Symmories, recognize the fact that union of the Greek states is a necessary prerequisite for a movement against Persia; but whereas in the *Panegyricus* Isocrates seeks to secure this unity by persuasion and to use it for a grand invasion of Asia, Demosthenes has no illusions as to the possibility of such an invasion. He sees the possibility of unity only as the result of some movement against Hellas which should force the states to make common cause in defense. The difference is fundamental.

Kessler, a pupil of Drerup's, presents in his *Isokrates und die panhellenische Idee* little that is new. He gives a useful review of recent literature on Isocrates as a publicist, but does not himself appreciate the real difficulties of the questions that he discusses. He gives insufficient explanation of the inconsistency of Isocrates' proposition in the first part of the *Panegyricus* that Athens and Sparta divide the hegemony, with his unsparing attack on Sparta in the later parts of the same work. He bases his assumption of Isocrates' plan for a pan-Hellenic council under Philip on the insufficient evidence of the passage of the *Philippus* criticized above. He has no criticism of the political vision of a man who could in 346 believe that Athens, Sparta, Thebes, and the anti-Spartan states of the Peloponnesus could be brought into harmonious submission to the leadership of a Macedonian king by other means than the conquest of the strongest of them. He fails to appreciate the essential change of attitude in Isocrates' plea in the *Panegyricus* that the political salvation of Hellas is to be found in a grand invasion of Persia, and his view in the pamphlet *On the Peace* that prosperity is to come not through war, but through peace. His assumption that the bestowal of Greek civilization on the barbarians of Asia was a part of Isocrates' program ("So sollte auch Philipp dem Ideal zum Siege



verhelfen, alle Menschen griechischen Bildung teilhaftig werden zu lassen," p. 61) is based on the altogether insufficient phrase of the *Philippus*, § 154, ἣν διὰ σὲ βαρβαρικῆς δεσποτείας ἀπαλλαγέντες Ἑλληνικῆς ἐπιμελείας τύχωσιν. Greek "guardianship" of the barbarian world would indeed in time carry with it Greek civilization, but there is nothing to show that Isocrates had this distinctly in mind as a part of the program of the future. Kessler's attempt to find in the appendix of the *Panathenaicus* a hidden description and appreciation of Macedon under Philip is valuable only as a warning of the dangers that beset the historian who attempts to interpret documents by "hidden meanings" and by reading between the lines rather than by their plain statements. Kessler's conclusion that the writings of Isocrates had practical effect not so much in influencing Philip and Alexander as in preparing public opinion for submission to them is interesting and probable; but the unity which the Macedonian power impressed upon Hellas was far from that unity of which Isocrates had dreamed.

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